

Park Road Montessori
SLT Meeting
Feb. 8, 2013

Members Present: Sharon Cherry, Aryon Dubinski, Barbara Dubinsky, Allison Hauser, Sherry Herbert, Anna Moraglia, Kristin Piscitelli, Susan Plaza, Manuel Rey, Ginger Salmon, Candace Steude, Cynthia Wood

Meeting called to order by Manuel Rey. January minutes were approved via email last month.

Principal's Report:

My School Rocks – Park Road is featured in an article. Will be sent home soon, missed Thursday folders this month. Ginger suggested scanning and posting it on the website. Candace will figure it out! CMS schools are featured every month. A link in the eblast would be nice.

There is a link on eblast to an article with Sir Ken Robinson in the Huffington Post which features a photo of him at PRM. It is already published. Manuel wondered if it mentioned PRM, not sure.

Magnet/Alternative Choice Task Force – nothing determined yet. Discussing what does choice mean, investigating different magnet options in other districts. There have been many surveys but they want feedback from the community, should be out soon. It is still too soon to determine any decisions.

Montessori Middle School - There has been a lot of concern among parents about the Montessori Middle School. Elementary principals have been discussing this, some is still hearsay, but could have a negative impact. Half of our 5th grade class is looking to leave, would impact staffing here. Some parents put together a survey – are you staying here for 6th grade and going to Sedgefield or leaving? They are happy at PRM but concerned about going to Sedgefield. There is staff turnover there, other concerns as well. If we start losing children, in danger of losing that program (Montessori Middle). There is a proposal to move the middle school program to our campus, would be temporary (2 years.) Original long term would move neighborhood Sedgefield students out and grow the middle into a high school program. Kristen wondered if 2 years is enough to establish the program? Survey among parents here would like it, not as well received by Chantilly and Highland Mills. They are concerned with distance and coming to a school where our children have been for 6 years. Ginger asked how many come from those schools? Currently eight 6th graders there. BOE ultimately makes the decision, Ann Clark and Jeff Linker are involved, but parents have not been able to get a meeting with Dr. Morrison. Ms. Moraglia spoke with the interim zone superintendent, she is supportive. Parents are trying to get a meeting with Dr. Linker and zone super with a proposal. We can house them as we are right now, would not have an expense involved. Manuel asked for teacher input. Ms. Sherry said teachers need support, middle school is very new for children and families, PRM could give

them the support needed. How do teachers at Sedgefield feel? There is talk that 2 of 3 staff leaving after this year. The principal is responsible for both programs there, Title 1 makes things difficult, problems are compounded. Susan wondered why teachers are leaving? One teacher may go into administration, another may leave district. Allison wondered why they would be in the preschool wing? Ms. Moraglia explained that we don't want to disrupt the classrooms in the mobile units. There is other space for Ms. Cindy and Ms. Suzanne, ASEP uses a room, TD and Band could also move to auditorium or elsewhere. Allison asked would it be a school within a school, or fold into PRM (PTA, SLT etc.?) Goal is to move for fall 2013. Kristen thinks we need formal support (mentors, meetings, etc.), a plan of action, possibly some outside interaction for adolescent programs. Barbara said there are so many outside restrictions under the Title 1 umbrella, they are not really allowed to be separate. It is difficult to have Montessori within a traditional school. Scheduling concerns at a regular middle school keep children from being in multi age classes at Sedgefield which is not Montessori. There is also friction from other staff, students, parents, etc. Allison wonders if new PRM parents would have concerns about older kids, need to be positive about this. The younger students look up to the older kids, older kids offer their guidance. It is critical to have reps from all schools to support the idea. Our facilities cannot support a high school. Allison wonders how we will handle the cafeteria space and auditorium? The lunch period would be longer. Ginger wondered if we were on the same schedule. Susan confirmed yes, all magnets on 9:15-4:15.

Focus Groups: Brought to Ms. Moraglia that we should focus on both strengths and weaknesses in SLT. She will bring some examples of what parents are saying they are missing. We could provide and implement a better PR plan for parents. Kristen noted some positive things that came out of the focus groups such as the lobby project. Parents are asking us to remember the positive things we do and highlight those things to the parent population and the public. Manuel noted the need to promote ourselves within the community. Manuel noted our campaign with Sir Ken as an example of what we should be doing on a more regular basis. Barbara noted TD programs and student awards in other schools as an example of what other schools do and ask how we translate those activities to Montessori and promote ourselves. Kristen suggests we build from within, build parent education so that they can be strong advocates, and then take those advocates to the community. Manuel said the Foundation for the Carolinas event was a great opportunity and those opportunities need to be promoted and shared with our school community and with the community at large. Ms. Moraglia asked the SLT to brainstorm and come up with some ideas. Manuel suggested starting with Parent Ed to build ambassadors so that they can communicate our best points to others. Candace mentioned a need for talking points for each of those groups (SLT, PTO, staff, parents, community. Barbara and Ginger agreed that the PRM Weekly Bulletins are great for information, suggested maybe creating a blog for promoting smaller things in the classroom.

Testing: Kristen said there are questions about the SIP. Would like to review testing – what have we done to improve those who fell behind last year? Are those students set for success next year? Ms. Moraglia explained that each child not at grade level at the end of the year will get a PEP to serve as a focus plan for the next school year. Those children will be involved in tutoring

groups where the tutoring program is focused on that area of deficiency. They also receive focused instruction in that content area in the classroom. Any formative test given within the district is issued for the purpose of determining student growth. Those tests are unified within Park Road Montessori. We use the formatives to monitor PEP's. If the child shows proficiency they can come off the PEP and out of the tutoring groups. Children can move in and out of those groups as needed based on their individual needs. Across the board, we are seeing some difficulty with the differences in the testing models which we are addressing with teacher training in the new testing models. Our biggest concerns are Math and science, which we are focusing on very hard. We have hired a new temporary employee to address these areas of study with the students. Park Road has a smaller number of children being tested than most schools in the district. One or two students can throw off our numbers for growth. Barbara suggested that parents should know we are scored on growth. Reference Plan of Action Document.....

Kristen asked what is our biggest concern in regard to testing? Ms. Anna said one of our biggest concerns is Math and the new testing format - children must now explain how they get their answers. Sharon said fractions and decimals – fundamentals are our biggest weakness. Second quarter assessments required no explanations. The 3rd and 4th grade assessments were multiple choice only. Fifth and 6th grade math assessments did have gridded response requirements. Math scores reflected weaknesses in fundamentals. Our reading scores are high for 5th grade. We all agreed that the amount of testing that is required is astounding, but we do not have a way around it. In the end, our students are still accountable for the same information on the EOG tests as every other CMS student. We discussed that perhaps parents would appreciate and better understanding as to how the tests are scored and how it reflects in PRMs report card. We need to demystify the testing black hole.

Parents felt the information gained in today's meeting was good and informative and hope to speak about it more in future meetings and find ways that SLT can help.